

APPLICANT: Trapas, J.
SERIAL NO.: 09/897,xxx
EXAMINER: C. Curtis
ART UNIT: 2872
Page 6 of 9

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's having conducted a telephone interview with the counsel for Applicants on February 24, 2004, regarding the allowability of the claims as proposed to be amended herein.

Claims 1-27 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1-27 have been rejected under 35 USC §112, first paragraph and second paragraph. Claims 1-5, 12, 13, and 17-27 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Butterfield et al. in view of Applicants' admitted prior art. Claims 6-8 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Butterfield et al. in view of Applicants' admitted prior art, and further in view of Ralli. Claims 9-11, and 14-16 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Butterfield et al. in view of Applicants' admitted prior art, and further in view of Kumai et al.

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 1-27 under 35 USC §112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The Examiner states that an intrinsic polarizer on whose first surface a first optically functional coating is disposed cannot be said to lack a protective coating thereon, since said optically functional coating inherently protects said intrinsic polarizer. In addition, the Examiner asserts that although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. Thus, the Examiner has rejected the claims as previously amended under 35 USC §112, first paragraph.

As previously stated, claims 1-27 satisfy 35 USC § 112, first paragraph because a person of ordinary skill in the art understands that a protective coating, such as cellulose triacetate,

APPLICANT: Trapa, J.
SERIAL NO.: 09/891,--
EXAMINER: C. Curtis
ART UNIT: 2872
Page 7 of 9

provides a polarizer with protection, e.g., from moisture and/or heat, and an optically functional coating affects the optical properties of light passing through such coating and does not inherently protect the underlying polarizer. Applicants are not incorporating limitations from the specification into the claims. Rather, Applicants are pointing out that the limitations already recited in the claims would be understood by one skilled in the art without further clarification. Independent claims 1 and 21-24 have been amended herein to include the nature of the protection with regard to the protective coating.

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 1-27 under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. The Examiner states that the meaning of the limitation "...unsupported intrinsic polarizer" cannot be ascertained. As previously stated, claims 1-27 satisfy 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, because a person of ordinary skill in the art understands that a support layer or structure, such as a substrate made of polyethylene terephthalate (PET), provides physical support to the polarizer. The specification clearly states that the present invention allows additional support structures for the polarizers in the optical stack to be eliminated. See, e.g., specification page 7, paragraph 27 and page 8, paragraph 41. Independent claims 1 and 21-24 have been amended herein to clarify further the meaning of the "...unsupported intrinsic polarizer" term. Accordingly, claims 1-27 satisfy 35 USC § 112, first and second paragraphs.

Independent claims 1, 21, and 22 recite, among other things, an optical stack including an intrinsic polarizer lacking a heat and moisture resistant protective coating and a support layer thereon and an optically functional coating. Independent claim 23 recites, among other things, an optical stack including a K-type polarizer lacking a heat and moisture resistant protective

APPLICANT: Trapa, IL
SERIAL NO.: 09/897,005
EXAMINER: C. Curtis
ART UNIT: 2872
Page 8 of 9

coating and a support layer thereon and an optically functional coating. Independent claim 24 recites a method of forming an optical stack, including providing an intrinsic polarizer lacking a heat and moisture resistant protective coating and a support layer thereon and disposing a first optically functional coating on the first surface of the intrinsic polarizer.

Amended independent claims 1, 21-24 are patentable over Butterfield, Ralli, Kumai, and Applicants' admitted prior art, because none of these references, either alone or in combination, shows or suggests an optical stack having an intrinsic polarizer lacking a heat and moisture resistant protective coating and a support layer thereon and an optically functional coating. Butterfield et al. teach a contrast enhancement filter including a support sheet, a layer of indium tin oxide, an antireflection layer, and a light-polarizing element. Butterfield et al. do not show or suggest a light-polarizing element lacking a support layer thereon such as an intrinsic polarizer lacking a support layer. Ralli teaches a light-diffusing holographic transreflector including a holographic layer and a transreflective layer being used with a liquid crystal display element. The liquid crystal display element includes two polarizers, two optically transmissive plates, a conductive element, a conductive layer and a layer of a twisted nematic liquid crystal composition. Ralli does not show or suggest an intrinsic polarizer lacking a heat and moisture resistant protective coating and a support layer thereon. According to the English-language abstract, Kumai et al. disclose an LCD panel having an acrylic substrate, hard coating films, and antireflection (AR) coating films. The English-language abstract of Kumai et al. does not show or suggest an intrinsic polarizer lacking a heat and moisture resistant protective coating and a support layer thereon. Applicants' admitted prior art discloses an intrinsic polarizer, such as a K-type polarizer, and discloses a liquid crystal display stack having a liquid crystal cell and polarizer structures with protective coatings attached to both surfaces of the liquid crystal display

APPLICANT: Trapa et al.
SERIAL NO.: 09/89...
EXAMINER: C. Curtis
ART UNIT: 2872
Page 9 of 9

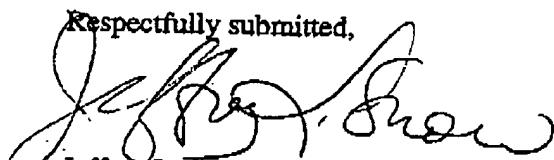
cell. Applicants' admitted prior art does not show or suggest an optical stack having an intrinsic polarizer lacking a heat and moisture resistant protective coating and a support layer thereon and an optically functional coating. Therefore, none of these references, either alone or in combination, shows or suggests the present invention.

Dependent claims 2-20, and 25-27 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1, and 21-24, and thus contain all of the limitations of the independent claims from which they depend. Therefore, these dependent claims are patentable over Butterfield, Ralli, Kumai, and Applicants' admitted prior art, either alone or in combination, for at least the same reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 21-24.

Enclosed is a Petition for One Month Extension of Time indicating that the extension fee is to be charged to Deposit Account 50-1721.

Applicants submit that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance, which action is requested. Please apply any charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 50-1721.

Respectfully submitted,



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